

EGREMONT GREEN COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

July 20, 2021

The meeting opened at 4:16.

Members present were Sharon Waskow, Marj Wexler (zoom), co-chairs Pat Konecky, and Emily Eyre

Acceptance of June 17, 2021, Minutes: Marj moved to accept, Sharon seconded, all voted to approve, motion was passed.

Emily read notes from Juliette's **Sustainability Report, Year-End Transfer Station Report**. It was noted that the station is very busy, indicating that more people have been in town full time and using the TS to dispose of trash. The amount of recycled paper tonnage, MSW, bottles and cans, and dual stream all continued the gradual increase of the past ten years.

Berkshire Edge Queue and Liaison: Marj described the Edge liaison tasks and agreed to try to take over that task from Corinna. Sharon will look into the Green Communities program and consider writing an article about that program, Egremont's achievements, and possible future steps/needs. Marj will speak with Juliette about drafting an article about the town's solid waste and recycling for the past year.

Emily: Rainbarrel photo essay was recently published in the Edge and there has been much interest in response. Rene Wood, Sheffield Recycling Coordinator, expressed interest in creating the rain barrel municipal program in Sheffield and will be in contact with The Great American Barrel Company. Six people want to be on the orders list for next spring.

Emily, possible new topic re: plastic reduction at food establishments. Sharon and Emily have been working on this initiative. They will consider an article.

Apparel Impact Clothing Donation Bin at Transfer Station: Marj spoke to Bill today. He said Juliette has already reached out to him. Juliette emailed that she's already taking care of clothing at the transfer station, taking it to Goodwill, as part of her job. Marj and Bill found a location for a donation bin near the swap shop. Marj suggested that having a clothing donation bin seems like a step better than our current system as this company distributes materials for free and relieves us of having to dispose of material. Bill suggested that our agreement with the company would have to include our ability to cancel if their ongoing maintenance of the bins is not satisfactory. Marj will speak with Jim Noe to get his opinion and to discuss the need for leveling the ground for the bin. She will also check with Juliette to confirm her opinion re making this change.

Peaker Plant: Pat provided an update on efforts to have the three peak-energy plants in the Berkshires switched to renewable energy with battery storage. Owners of the two smaller plants are investigating making this change. Owners of Pittsfield Generating have not been responsive. The Pittsfield Department of Health has become concerned, as have several local

elected officials. The Peaker Project group is planning to attend and speak when Pittsfield Generating applies for new licensing in the coming months. The group and others are demonstrating outside the plant on Friday afternoons. No Fracked Gas in Mass is a good site for learning more.

Questions came up about sharing this info with residents of Egremont to see if others would want to come. The committee will explore options.

Review of Egremont Green Committee Mission and conversations with the BOS re: communications about our activities. It was agreed that the Committee's mission statement as written on the town website accurately describes our interests and goals. Pat will follow up with Lucinda to further the discussion with the BoS. One outstanding question is how we get BoS review and sign-off for efforts that require quick response.

Plastic reduction efforts for Eg food establishments. Sharon and Emily explored the use of plastic in food establishments to, initially, find out about their current practices. They discovered a mix of plastic and compostable containers and plastic straws available or offered. Mom's provided a take-out container made by Worldgentric that is apparently compostable -- a plant fiber that turns to soil in 90 days.

Terry Moore at The Old Mill cited challenges to being green. They use cardboard when possible, but wet food doesn't keep well in it. Challenge for composting is that the kitchen is too small to separate food waste as needed.

Discussions centered on how much to encourage these establishments, how to promote the option of bringing your own take-out containers (Sharon will look into current health regulations), and how we might proceed with public education and making change. The committee will discuss further at the August meeting.

Spraying ban topic is currently on hold.

Other Business: Heidi Zorn would like to meet with one of us so that Devine can proceed in conjunction with our green efforts. Emily will meet with her.

Emily will share open meeting law info with the committee.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 4, at 4pm, at French Park.

The meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Submitted by Pat Konecky